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P 241043Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 5476
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3040
INFO RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 4745
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5303

UNCLAS MOSCOW 001072

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

USDA FAS FOR OCRA/KUYPERS, RIKER; OSTA/BEAN,
HAXTON; ONA/TING, SALLYARDS
PASS FSIS DUTROW, HARRIES
PASS APHIS SNOWDON
STATE FOR EUR/RUS
STATE PASS USTR FOR CHATTIN, HAFNER, MURPHY
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ
VIENNA PASS APHIS/MITCHELL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAGR ETRD ECON WTO RS
SUBJECT: TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON 3 MORE
POULTRY PLANTS

REF: A) HANSEN/DUTROW EMAIL 3/19/09

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Russian Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) advised via official letter that 3 more U.S. poultry facilities have been temporarily restricted from exporting to Russia due to concerns that products from these facilities were involved in an illegal smuggling attempt. The letter states that Russia will consider removing restrictions from the facilities only after USDA conducts an in-depth investigation of the occurrence. The original scanned copy of the letter and courtesy translation were sent to FAS/FSIS on April 22, 2009 (REF A). An informal embassy translation of the letter follows. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT:
Moscow, April 22, 2009
No. FS-NV-2/3658

Assistant Administrator
Office of International Affairs
USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

Dear Dr. Jones:

The Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) extends its regards to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of USDA. In response to your letter of March 30, 2009, and in addition to our letters FS-NV-2/93 of January 14, 2009; FS-NV-2/401 of January 26, 2009; and FS-NV-2/2416 of March 20, 2009, I would like to inform of you of the following:

After studying all materials submitted by FSIS, VPSS has made the following conclusion:

In early December 2008, VPSS officials revealed an attempt to import products of unknown origin with counterfeit veterinary certificates RFA-035465 and RFA-035466 to the address of ZAO

"Dalnevostochny Khladokombinat" based in Primorsky kray.

On December 29, 2008, an electronic pre-notification arrived from FSIS regarding the shipment to the address of the above-mentioned company issuing veterinary certificates RFA-035465 and RFA-035466.

To date, the original copies of the veterinary certificates that were indicated in the electronic pre-notification message have not arrived to the consignee.

In order to undertake joint measures to prevent illegal activity in the international trade of meat products, we ask FSIS to speed up completing the investigation and to confirm authenticity of the following documents:

Veterinary certificate that was sent to your address with letter FS-NV-2/401 of January 26, 2009;

Information that arrived via electronic pre-notification on December 29, 2008.

We ask you also to submit the results of your investigation as to where the original veterinary certificates RFA-035465 and RFA-035466 are currently located that were supposedly issued by FSIS.

Until the investigation of this case is complete, VPSS will impose temporary restrictions on the exports of products to Russia from U.S. establishments P-13369, P-208, P-19275 starting April 27, 2009. These establishments are involved in the whole technological chain from slaughter, including cutting, to cold storage.

Mr. Jones, let me assure you of my highest esteem.

Deputy Head
N.A. Vlasov
END TEXT

¶3. (SBU) Post recommends that FSIS conduct an in-depth investigation on this matter in short order. VPSS officials have privately informed Post that they are ready to remove restrictions on the 3 U.S. poultry facilities in question as soon as a thorough investigation has been completed, provided no derogatory information is found during the FSIS investigation. According to VPSS contacts, fraud and smuggling of meat and poultry products into Russia are growing problems, particularly in the Russian Far East, and Russian authorities are ramping up efforts to stop the flow of illegal meat shipments.

RUBIN